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PROCIB-D-12
30 April 1959

CONFIDENTIAL

April 27, 1959

Dear [REDACTED]

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I am in receipt of your letter of February 27, 1959, in which you ask for a statement of policy from the Department of State on the question of negotiating an exchange of publications between U. S. government libraries and Communist China, North Korea, North Viet-Nam, Outer Mongolia and East Germany.

Relations between the United States and the regimes referred to are such that the Department has pursued a policy of avoiding, as far as possible, any official action which might tend to enhance their international status. It is the Department's view that negotiations by the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine and the Department of Agriculture Library, as agencies of the U. S. government, with these regimes or the instrumentalities of these regimes, might well be interpreted both at home and abroad in such a way as to cause embarrassment to the United States in its international relations. Such negotiations could have an adverse effect on our policy of non-recognition and the attitudes and reactions of friendly governments, which would overshadow any benefit that might be derived through increased publications. It is therefore the general policy of the Department to withhold formal approval for negotiations of this nature.

I am informed that the propriety of publication exchanges between the Library of Congress and certain institutions of Communist China, Outer Mongolia and East Germany and Bulgaria was considered some time ago. Our records show that the Department of State informed the Library of Congress on two occasions that it could not approve the commencement of negotiations with the

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Assistant Director,
Office of Central Reference,
Central Intelligence Agency.

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Chinese Communist or Outer Mongolian regimes. At that time no objections were raised by the Department to the continuance of certain Library of Congress exchanges with institutions in East Germany and Bulgaria since they were already in effect. However, no official sanction or "permission" for the commencement or maintenance of exchanges between U. S. government institutions and either of these two countries was given or issued by the Department.

Since we have now resumed diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, the Department, of course, has no objections to the commencement of exchanges with that country.

The Department is, of course, keenly aware of the significant role which foreign publications play in intelligence research and is entirely sympathetic with the needs of our libraries for this material. We have given the problem much thought and believe that there may be other means by which at least a significant portion of these publications may be procured, possibly with the help of the Department. We shall be glad to discuss such possibilities at greater length should you so desire.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh S. Cumming, Jr.
The Director of Intelligence and Research